

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-40. (cancelled)

41. (new) A method for processing a workflow, wherein said workflow

(1) includes a plurality of activities and workflow transition information,

(2) is constituted by at least one workflow packet each requiring at least one of the plurality of activities,

(3) is processed by a plurality of activity servers that are operable to process other workflows, each of said plurality of activity servers capable of performing at least one of said plurality of activities,

the method comprising the steps of:

a) retrieving, from a workflow queue operative to handle said workflow and the other workflows, a workflow packet requiring at least a first one of said plurality of activities to be executed, said workflow packet being retrieved by one of said plurality of activity servers capable of performing the first activity;

b) performing the first activity, by said one of said plurality of activity servers;

c) determining a next activity of said workflow that is to be performed immediately following the first activity, based on said workflow transition information;

d) if said one of said plurality of activity servers performs the next activity and if the next activity is required by the retrieved workflow packet, performing the next activity, by said one of said plurality of activity servers;

e) if said one of said plurality of activity servers does not perform the next activity or if the next activity is not required by the retrieved workflow packet, forwarding control of said workflow back to said workflow queue; and

f) repeating steps (a) – (e) as necessary until all of said plurality of activities in said workflow are performed.

42. (new) The method of claim 41, wherein said workflow packet includes a process state.

43. (new) The method of claim 42, wherein the step of forwarding to said workflow queue includes the steps of:

persisting said workflow packet requiring the next activity and the process state; and
forwarding said workflow packet to said workflow queue for performance by one of the plurality of activity servers capable of performing the next activity.

44. (new) The method of claim 41, further comprising a database for storing said transition information, said method further comprising the step of:

retrieving said transition information from said database, said transition information being retrievable by all of said plurality of activity servers.

45. (new) The method of claim 41, wherein at least one of said plurality of activity servers performs more than one of said plurality of activities.

46. (new) The method of claim 41, wherein at least one of said plurality of activities is an automatic activity.

47. (new) The method of claim 41, wherein at least one of said plurality of activities is a manual activity for receiving a user input.

48. (new) The method of claim 47, wherein said manual activity manages a user interface.

49. (new) The method of claim 41, wherein more than one of said plurality of activities is a manual activity and wherein said more than one of said plurality of activities are aggregated in one of said plurality of activity servers.

50. (new) The method of claim 49, wherein said one of said plurality of activity servers interfaces with a desktop server for providing a user interface to a user.

51. (new) The method of claim 41, wherein at least one of said plurality of activities is performed by more than one of said plurality of activity servers.

52. (new) The method of claim 41, further comprising the steps of:

receiving an event notification requesting that said workflow be processed; and
initiating said workflow in response to the event notification.

53. (new) The method of claim 41, wherein said transition information includes a routing transition.

54. (new) The method of claim 53, further comprising the step of:
performing more than one of said plurality of activities and more than one routing transition in a single transaction in one of said plurality of activity servers.

55. (new) The method of claim 41, wherein said transition information includes a route number, a node number, a routing transition and a next node number.

56. (new) A system for processing a workflow, wherein said workflow

- (1) includes a plurality of activities and workflow transition information,
- (2) is constituted by at least one workflow packet each requiring at least one of the plurality of activities,
- (3) is processed by a plurality of activity servers that are operable to process other workflows, each of said plurality of activity servers capable of performing at least one of said plurality of activities,

said system comprising:

- a database for storing said workflow transition information;
- a workflow queue for storing the at least one workflow and other workflows; and

said plurality of activity servers, each of said plurality of activity servers performing at least one of said plurality of activities, and each of said plurality of activity servers including a workflow engine for receiving said workflow transition information from said database; and

a plurality of resource managers, each of said plurality of activity servers including one of said plurality of resource managers,

wherein each of said plurality of resource managers is operable for:

(a) retrieving from the workflow a workflow packet requiring at least a first one of said plurality of activities to be executed, said workflow packet being retrieved by the resource manager for one of said plurality of activity servers capable of performing the first activity;

b) performing the first activity, by said one of said plurality of activity servers;

c) determining a next activity of said workflow that is to be performed immediately following the first activity, based on said workflow transition information;

d) if said one of said plurality of activity servers performs the next activity and if the next activity is required by the retrieved workflow packet, performing the next activity, by said one of said plurality of activity servers;

e) if said one of said plurality of activity servers does not perform the next activity or if the next activity is not required by the retrieved workflow packet, forwarding control of said workflow back to said workflow queue; and

f) repeating steps (a) – (e) as necessary until all of said plurality of activities in said workflow are performed.

57. (new) The system of claim 56, wherein said workflow packet includes a process state.

58. (new) The system of claim 56, wherein each of said plurality of resource managers forwards the workflow packet including the next activity and the process state to said workflow queue.

59. (new) The system of claim 56, wherein at least one of said plurality of activity servers performs more than one of said plurality of activities.

60. (new) The system of claim 56, wherein at least one of said plurality of activities is an automatic activity.

61. (new) The system of claim 56, wherein at least one of said plurality of activities is a manual activity for receiving an input from a user.

62. (new) The system of claim 61, wherein said manual activity manages a user interface.

63. (new) The system of claim 56, wherein more than one of said plurality of activities is a manual activity and wherein said more than one of said plurality of activities are aggregated in one of said plurality of activity servers.

64. (new) The system of claim 63, wherein said one of said plurality of activity servers interfaces with a desktop server for providing a user interface to a user.

65. (new) The method of claim 56, wherein at least one of said plurality of activities is performed by more than one of said plurality of activity servers.

66. (new) The system of claim 56, further comprising an event receiver, said event receiver receiving an event notification for initiating said workflow.

67. (new) The system of claim 56, wherein said transition information includes a route number, a node number, a routing transition and a next node number.

68. (new) Computer executable program code residing on a computer-readable medium, the program code comprising instructions for causing the computer to perform a method for processing a workflow, wherein said workflow

(1) includes a plurality of activities and workflow transition information,

(2) is constituted by at least one workflow packet each requiring at least one of the plurality of activities,

(3) is processed by a plurality of activity servers that are operable to process other workflows, each of said plurality of activity servers capable of performing at least one of said plurality of activities,

the method comprising the steps of:

a) retrieving, from a workflow queue operative to handle said workflow and the other workflows, a workflow packet requiring at least a first one of said plurality of activities to be executed, said workflow packet being retrieved by one of said plurality of activity servers capable of performing the first activity;

b) performing the first activity, by said one of said plurality of activity servers;

c) determining a next activity of said workflow that is to be performed immediately following the first activity, based on said workflow transition information;

d) if said one of said plurality of activity servers performs the next activity and if the next activity is required by the retrieved workflow packet, performing the next activity, by said one of said plurality of activity servers;

e) if said one of said plurality of activity servers does not perform the next activity or if the next activity is not required by the retrieved workflow packet, forwarding control of said workflow back to said workflow queue; and

f) repeating steps (a) – (e) as necessary until all of said plurality of activities in said workflow are performed.

69. (new) The program code of claim 68, wherein said workflow packet includes a process state.

70. (new) The program code of claim 69, wherein the step of forwarding to said workflow queue includes the steps of:

persisting said workflow packet requiring the next activity and the process state; and

forwarding said workflow packet to said workflow queue for performance by one of the plurality of activity servers capable of performing the next activity.

71. (new) The program code of claim 68, said method further comprising the step of:
retrieving said transition information from a database, said transition information being retrievable by all of said plurality of activity servers.

72. (new) The program code of claim 68, wherein at least one of said plurality of activities is an automatic activity.

73. (new) The program code of claim 68, wherein at least one of said plurality of activities is a manual activity for receiving a user input.

74. (new) The program code of claim 73, wherein said manual activity manages a user interface.

75. (new) The program code of claim 68, wherein more than one of said plurality of activities is a manual activity and wherein said more than one of said plurality of activities are aggregated in one of said plurality of activity servers.

76. (new) The program code of claim 68, wherein at least one of said plurality of activities is performed by more than one of said plurality of activity servers.

77. (new) The program code of claim 68, further comprising the steps of:
receiving an event notification requesting that said workflow be processed; and
initiating said workflow in response to the event notification.

78. (new) The method of claim 68, wherein said transition information includes a routing transition.

79. (new) The program code of claim 78, further comprising the step of:
performing more than one of said plurality of activities and more than one routing transition in a single transaction in one of said plurality of activity servers.

80. (new) The program code of claim 68, wherein said transition information includes a route number, a node number, a routing transition and a next node number.